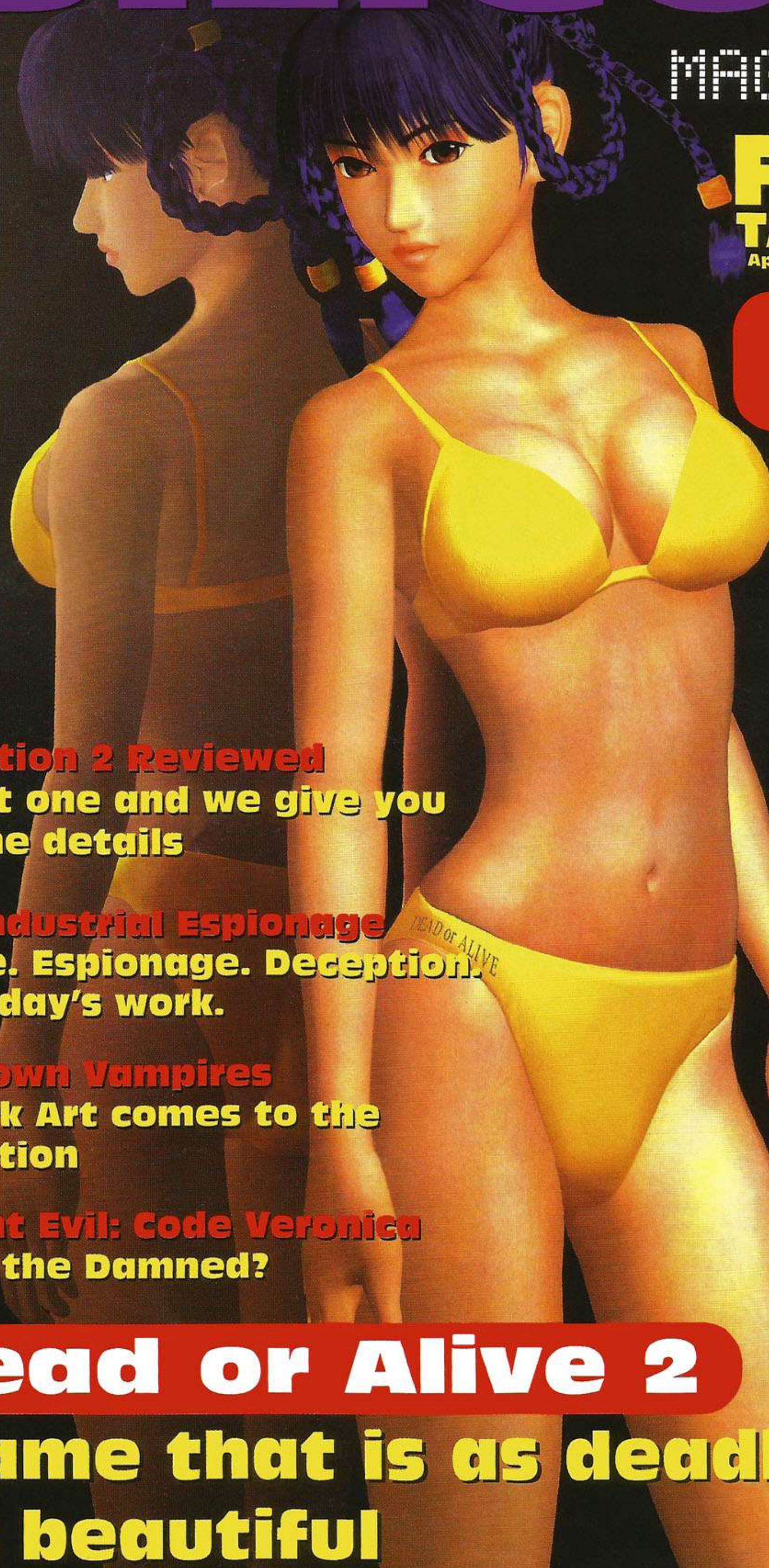
Making Every Videogamer An Insider

SILICON MAGAZINE

FREE TAKE ONE

April 2000 • Episode 20



Exclusive Alundra 2 Contest on Page 14

Playstation 2 Reviewed
SM's got one and we give you all of the details

I Spy: Industrial Espionage
Intrigue. Espionage. Deception. All in a day's work.

Countdown Vampires
The Dark Art comes to the Playstation

Resident Evil: Code Veronica
King of the Damned?

Dead or Alive 2
A game that is as deadly as it is beautiful

TOWERS

LORD BANIFF'S DECEIT

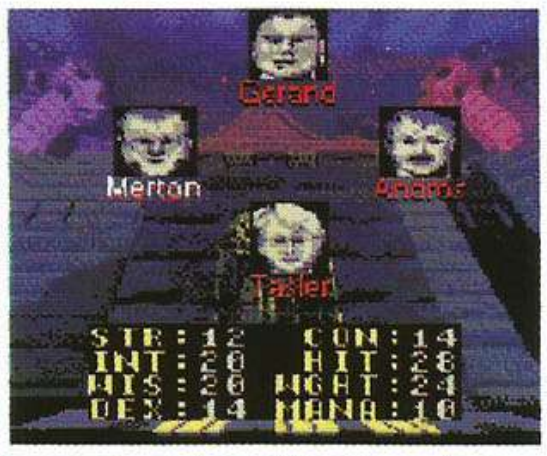
The most immersive role-playing experience ever created for a hand-held system.

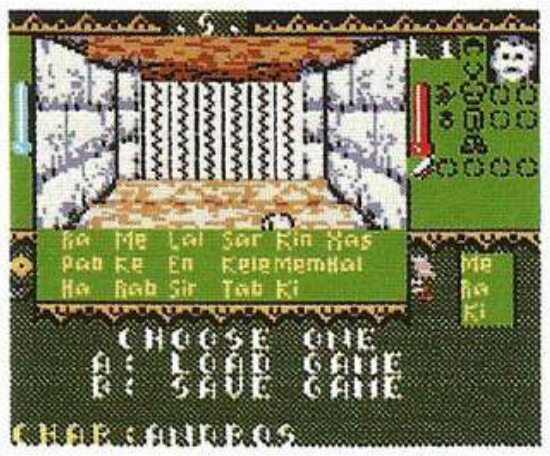
"Towers looks set to push the envelope for Game Boy Color games"

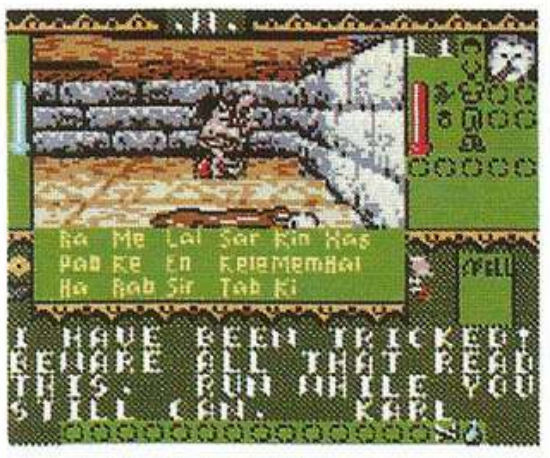
- CoreMagazine.com

REAL-TIME 3D RPG

- First person movement
- Hundreds of monsters to battle
- Cast spells, arm yourself
- 15 complex levels to explore
- Battery back-up to save two separate adventures
- Two-player cooperative mode






Ba Me Lal Sar Rin Nas
Pad Ke En KeleMemHal
Ha Bab Sir Tab Ki
I HAVE BEEN TRICKED!
BEWARE ALL THAT READ
THIS. RUN WHILE YOU
STILL CAN. KARL

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GAME BOY COLOR

TELEGAMES

VATICAL ENTERTAINMENT

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Hardware:
Apple Power Macintosh 8600/300, Apple Studio Display 17, Hewlett Packard Color Laserjet 4500N, Smart and Friendly 426 CD Rewritable, Iomega 100 MB Zip drive, Epson Expression 636 flatbed scanner, Nikon Coolscan II film scanner, Asante Friendlynet Ethernet Hubs

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Accessing: The State Of The Game

PS2: The 128 Bit War Begins

March 4, 2000 PS2 launched in Japan.

March 5, 2000 SM received a Japanese PS2. The box comes packed with a PS2 system, a Dual Shock 2 controller, an 8 MB card, a utilities CD that contains DVD drivers (more on this later), power and AV cables. The box itself is a shiny, deep reflex blue with the phrases "PS2" and "PlayStation 2" smack dab in the middle. It's elegant first impression to say the least.

After five solid days of playing the Japanese launch games (we know it's a dirty job, but someone has to do it) even the hardened SM editors were fairly impressed, although not blown away. Ten titles were available at launch. Ridge Racer V, Kessen, and Street Fighter EX3 are the three games we enjoyed most. They are guaranteed a domestic release and are reviewed fully on page 6. Eternal Ring is a decent title, but is really little more than a 128 bit King's Field. Regardless, it will probably make it over here. The last six titles Take the A Train 6 (a train simulator), Mahjong Taika III (Mahjong, of course), Morita Shogi (a visually intense chess-like game), Stepping Selection (a dancing title), Kakinoki Shogi IV (chess-like and focused on gameplay, not graphics), and Drummania (a drum simulation) are sure to stay in Japan as they would not sell well stateside. Both Stepping Selection and Drummania will appear in future Wanted sections.

Rumors have been floating around that the backward compatibility with PSX is a mixed blessing. Sony has published a list of twelve PSX games that will not work on the PS2, and even then it isn't a huge issue since only Monster Rancher, Gallop Racer, and Wing Commander 3 are available in the U.S. We do expect a few more incompatibilities to pop up, but the number of problematic games will stay well below the 1% mark. One of the features we really liked was the enhanced texture filtering the PS2 offers PSX software. We tested PSX games from Enix and Capcom on the PS2. In all cases the visuals were smoother, and the load times shorter than they were on the PSX. Overall, the upsides of backward compatibility outweighs any downsides.

While the Dual Shock 2 is exactly the same as size as the Dual Shock, it is a lot lighter in the hands and doesn't feel nearly as sturdy. On a positive note the action buttons are analog, although no game yet supports this feature. Still, being able to alter how hard a batter swings in a baseball game by varying the amount of pressure applied to the button, for instance will make for a level of interaction previously not seen. Additionally, the controller's cord is almost eight feet long, let's hope Sony doesn't change this. We also tested PSX controllers from Sony (Dual Shock) and Nyko (Viper) on the PS2 and both worked without a hitch with PSX and PS2 games.

The games themselves come in DVD cases as opposed to the CD jewel cases used with PSX games. Originally it was thought that CD based PS2 software would come in jewel cases, and DVD based games would come in DVD cases. In order to avoid consumer confusion, and make the PS2 feel that much slicker, DVD cases are the order of the day. Every case has a slot that allows you to snap in memory cards for transport. Also, PS2 CDs are a deep purple color, and DVDs silver.

The PS2 represents the high end of gaming technology, and it looks the part. While we were apprehensive at first about the angular design, but once we got it out of the box, the look began to grow on us. A few days later, everyone agrees that it's the best looking system yet. The reset and tray open/close buttons respectively have bright green and blue indicator lights that add a good deal of class to the system.

Right out of the box, the PS2 will play DVD movies, and the picture quality is identical to that of a stand-alone DVD player. The version 1.0 DVD driver (which can be easily upgraded) is stored on the memory card. DVDs sold in the U.S. will not play on an import PS2 by default, but a few codes have been found to work around the lockouts. See Decrypted on page 20 for more information.

SM has heard reports of defective memory cards. (Sony even admits to some problems.) It should be noted that importers are taking a risk, as the warranty is not valid outside of Japan. The worst case scenario is that you'll have to wait a few weeks and buy a new memory card once the quality issues are cleared up. For the record though, SM's PS2 memory card is working perfectly.

PS2 was a very typical launch, not the revolution many other magazines had hyped it into. There were no major disasters and most importantly the system finally made it into consumer's hands. The launch titles had a "first generation" look and feel, but they are only the very tip of the PS2 iceberg. In Japan new systems don't need the mountains of software American gamers demand to take the "new platform plunge". The U.S. launch will not only have more software to offer, but the flaws in the currently available titles (all of which were rushed to make the March 4 deadline) will more than likely be fixed. Playstation 2 is a great piece of hardware, and with time it will really prove itself. SM's advice: Save your pennies for a PS2; it's a must buy. In the mean time go out and buy a Dreamcast (which has proven to be a very competitive platform). This is an exciting time to be a gamer, and in a very large part we have Sony to thank. 128 bit gaming is here!

•SM

Continued on page 6...

• We had a special house party at Mike's place with his 50" TV as the 27" at the office didn't do the PS2 justice

• The PS2 box, Kessen, Ridge Racer V, Street Fighter EX3 (note the memory card holder built into the case), Utilities CD and 8 MB memory card

Boxes

In a rare move, Bandai has decided to leave Silent Bomber's box art just like it was in Japan (minus the Kanji, of course), the result? One cool box.

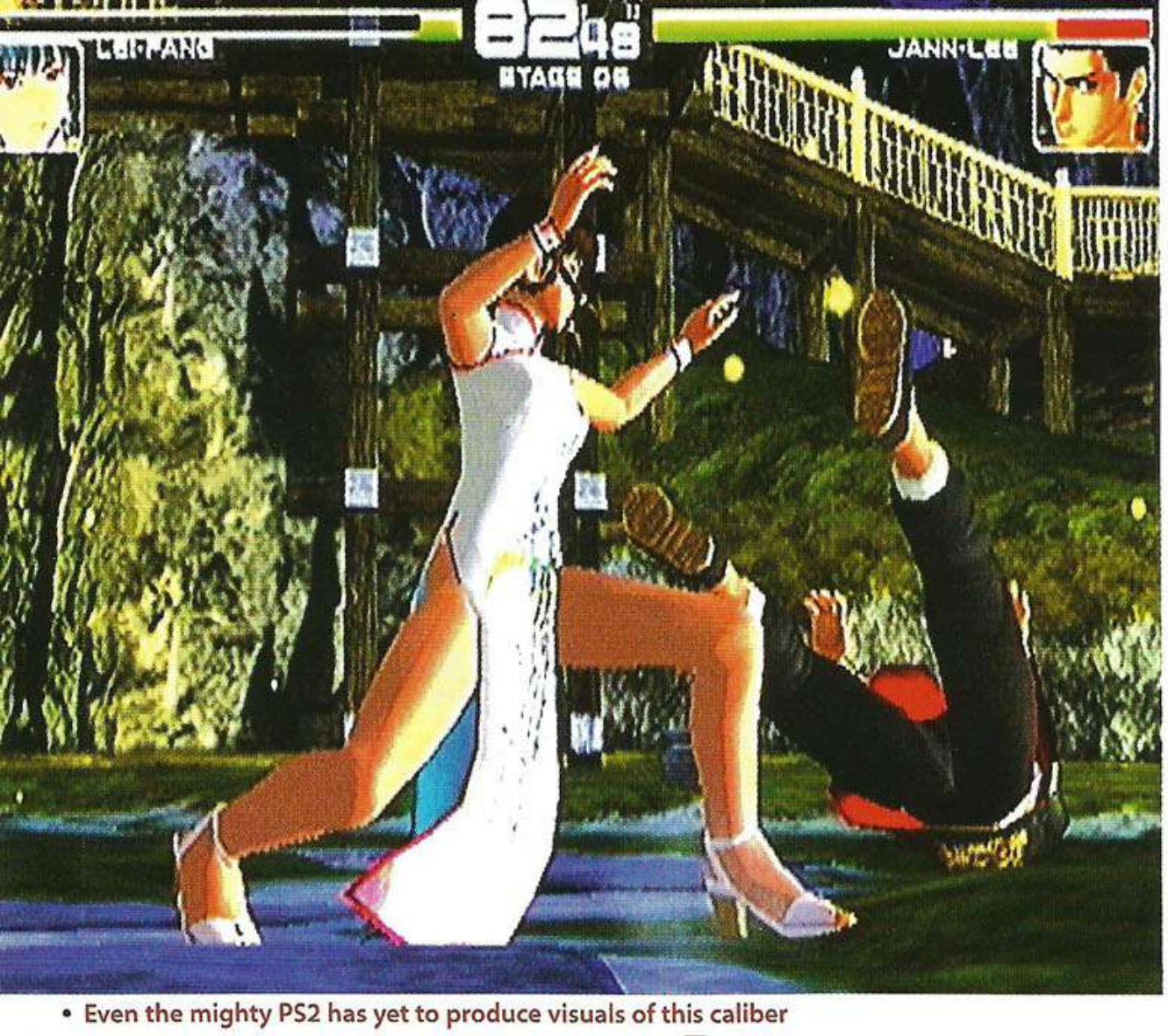
Noticed: The Details That Matter

Although no official statement has been given as to why the relationship between Microsoft and Sega was terminated, Microsoft's announcement of its competing X Box console (which will NOT play Dreamcast games) is likely the reason.

DC still needs a mainstream operating system in order to coax computer game developers into porting over their software. In a surprise announcement, Sega stated that all future DC units will have a version of Apple's Mac OS instead of Windows CE. According to Sega spokesperson Uno Piazzo, "The Mac is a great gaming platform and we expect a lot of exciting Mac to DC, and DC to Mac conversions by Christmas."

Coverage:

An in-depth look at the cutting edge of videogaming.



• Even the mighty PS2 has yet to produce visuals of this caliber

Dead Or Alive 2

Platform: Dreamcast • **Publisher:** Tecmo • **Release Date:** Now • **Stage:** 100%

Dead or Alive 2 is a game of extremes. Everything from its trademark bounciness to its exquisite look has caused heads to turn and pushes a limit somewhere.

Take, for instance, the graphics. Each character has been lovingly rendered down to the smallest nuance. With the power of the Dreamcast at its disposal, DOA2 does not have any harsh, sharp edges, but smoothes each character to almost human-like sleekness. When Kasumi, with the wind softly moving her flowing skirts, steps up to battle, it is hard not to be awestruck. Each fighter's movements impersonate the ebb and flow of real life with a deceivingly beautiful grace.

Little extras help to make this title a masterpiece. Things like, well, shoes. When we see how much care and precession has been taken in rendering a small detail such as a boot, it really makes us appreciate the passion within this title. In one of Lei Feng's alternative outfits, she is dressed in black with a pair of matching black boots and red shoe laces. Not only can you tell that these are red shoelaces, but you can also see that they are tied, and you can watch each individual end of the shoelace move during a battle. Even a unique tread on the bottom of the boot has been rendered. These finer points prove that details matter to Tecmo.

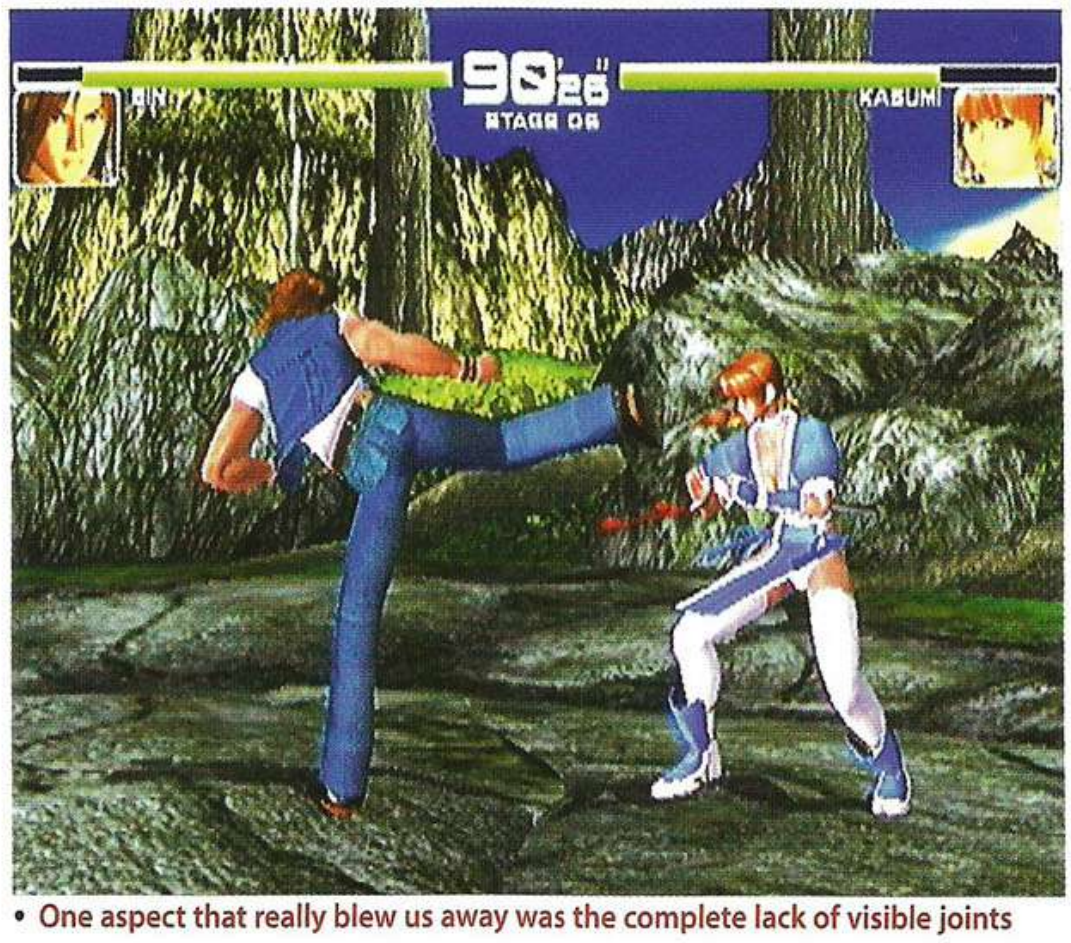
In this case beauty is not skin deep. A fighting game cannot survive without a competent combat engine. DOA2 uses an engine that provides the almost perfect balance that most players hope for. Fighting at blazing speeds that Street Fighter II Turbo alumni will appreciate, DOA2 gives you complete control over difficulty within every aspect of this title. A beginner can step up and after setting the game to Easy or even Normal and be able to stand a chance. Veterans can jump in and using the higher difficulty settings, and expect a challenge as they attempt to master the intricacies of the counter attack system.

The Dreamcast version of Dead Or Alive 2 is much more than a simple port of an already great arcade game. Along with the now requisite time attack, survival and versus modes DOA2 features a Tag Battle, that will allow up to 4 players to engage in the action or let 2 players work cooperatively against a computer team.

While no game is perfect, the list of problems with DOA2 is quite slim. The translation from Japanese to English is confusing and some times just downright wrong. However, this has virtually no effect on the gameplay whatsoever, unless somehow the few chuckles it causes detracts from your skills. Also, the level lay out causes some objects to go semi-transparent when they camera swings past them in order for them to not block the view of the action. While not blocking the action is a good thing, it can sometimes be a distraction.

DOA2 will be one of those titles, much like the original Tecmo Super Bowl that will cause gamers a few years from now to pull out their "old" Dreamcast, dust it off, and fire it up for a couple of rounds. It is what we refer to as a Classic.

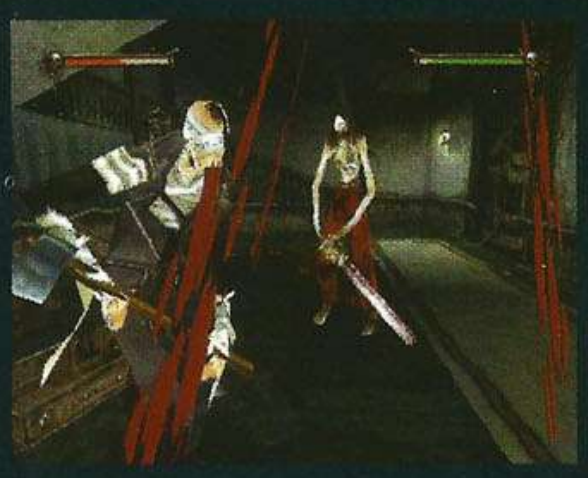
•SM Rating: 93



• One aspect that really blew us away was the complete lack of visible joints

• More screens you say? Your wish is our command

FE, FI, FO, FUM,
I smell the blood of an Englishman.
Be he alive or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.



This is a game of revenge. A dark early 1900s revenge where you'll battle against 20 different creatures using new fighting techniques, combination moves, and fatalities. A revenge that goes deep into 30 game sectors in 8 different worlds including subways, castles, sewers, cities (London|Paris), cemeteries, villages, and underwater.

A gory revenge. An extremely gory revenge.

Soundtrack by Rob Zombie.

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Animated Blood and Gore

kalisto entertainment

Sega Dreamcast

PlayStation

KONAMI

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Kessen

Platform: PlayStation 2 • **Publisher:** Koei • **Release Date:** Now • **Stage:** 100%

Kessen literally means "the last battle", and after playing this ground-breaking action/strategy title for the first time we didn't want there to ever be a last battle. This is the first and only launch title that really managed to get our blood pumping. It is also the first console DVD game ever.

Just like real war, Kessen is 80% planning, and 20% insanely, realistic combat. If you are familiar with Koei's Romance games, then you know Kessen's interface. The main difference is that the battle scenes are anything, but orderly. Once we set up the armies where we wanted them, and tapped the attack button, utter chaos erupted. In one scene, we counted 50 soldiers on screen. Each and every one of them was doing something different whether shooting the horse out from under a mounted samurai or running a foot soldier through with a sword. No game has ever conveyed the feeling of confusion so well or in such rich graphic detail. As a battle went on, the air got dustier and many soldiers lost their lives in a fairly graphic manner. Mixed in with the superb in-game visuals are CG cinemas of the absolute finest quality we've yet seen (again this is a DVD, not CD). The great voice acting and gripping story of struggle in feudal Japan really brought the emotional aspects of this title home for us.

Kessen is a very special game. Kudos to Koei.

•SM Rating: 93

Street Fighter EX3

Platform: PlayStation 2 • **Publisher:** Capcom • **Release Date:** Now • **Stage:** 100%

Once upon a time, having a Street Fighter launch title would have been quite a coup. However, the days of the SNES are past, and so it seems is the ability of the SF series to knock our socks off. Don't get us wrong, SFEX3 is solid, but it fails to provide that great technological leap we expected.

We anticipated the graphics to be the best of any fighter yet. Simply put, they are not. While some points are excellently rendered, they lack refined detail and ultra smooth motion. We acknowledge that SFEX3 is mostly a souped up arcade port and adding extra frames of animation would have thrown off its delicate timing, but it didn't stop us from expecting more. On a side note, the nauseating background scrolling and fluxing is irritating. Much like when someone points out an auto accident; once we noticed it we couldn't stop ourselves from watching it, and getting sick.

The gameplay in SFEX3 is classic Street Fighter stuff. All of the combos work, all the moves were easy to pull off, and like a favorite pair of sneakers, we slipped into it quite comfortably. The player creation mode is a nice twist and the multiple character aspect gives it a shot of freshness. However, both the multi character battles and the Final Fightesque battle during the ending credits suffer from noticeable slowdown.

SFEX3 is an enjoyable title, but if the PS2 is going to demand our undying devotion (which we believe it does somewhere in the instruction manual), it's going to have to come through with a little more.

•SM Rating: 75

Ridge Racer V

Platform: PlayStation 2 • **Publisher:** Namco • **Release Date:** Now • **Stage:** 100%

Unless you have been living under a rock for the past year, SM is sure that everyone has heard all of the hype surrounding the PS2. Many media sources have stated "officially" that the system's hardware and software will be so much better than that of the Dreamcast that Sega should pack up shop and go home. The PS2 has now launched in Japan, and the cards are on the table. So how does one of the launch titles, Ridge Racer V stack up? Like the PS2, it does some things well.

As expected, the first thing we noticed were the superb graphics. The detailed structure of the mountains and trees along the countryside tracks were nothing short of perfection. We also noticed little things such as moving monorail trains along the city tracks; true reflections of the surroundings off of the car's back windshield, and flying seagulls along the beach were all great extras. Graphically, this game is amazing.

Gameplay is typical Ridge Racer. The modes include Grand Prix, Time Attack, Versus, Dual Mode, and Free Run. Car handling is similar to that of the old Ridge Racer games. Choose from drift or grip style vehicles for the races. Unlike other RR titles, the music in RRV can be best described as annoying, and it just doesn't quite sound like racing music.

RRV is fun, looks great, and is a good quality launch title that just comes off as a bit uninspired.

•SM Rating: 84

It's more than run and gun. It's blow and go. Evil super battle ship Dante has been dispatched to blow up the planet. You've been dispatched to stop it. After all, that's what you've been genetically engineered for. Armed with napalm, gravity, fire and paralyzer bombs, you're the only thing standing between her and total destruction of an entire race. With 26 explosive missions, it's action so intense you won't be able to tear yourself away. Bathroom? Maybe next year.

NAPALM BOMBS. GRAVITY BOMBS. PARALYZER BOMBS. FIRE BOMBS. THIS GAME REALLY BLOWS.

SilentBomber™

PlayStation®

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RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Buzz: For The Insider

From The Hype Is Over, The Playstation 2 Is There Department:
On Your Mark: On the first day of operation, www.jp.playstation.com received over 100,000 pre-orders for the PS2 before overwhelming web traffic shut it down.

Get Set: Sony has released a list of Playstation games that are not compatible with the PS2 and the list contains a measly 12 Japanese titles. Of those titles, only 4 have been released in the U.S. Of course, the rumor Buzzing around is that the latest delay for Dragon Warrior VII was to ensure PS2 compatibility.

GO! : Rumor has it that Sony will be losing about $20 on each Playstation 2 console sold. So, selling almost one million units (980,000 actually) in the first weekend has caused them to rack up a $20 million loss on hardware.

Of course, the PS2 launch went off without a hitch. Yeah, right. It seems that Ridge Racer V and the DVD drivers don't get along, causing some PS2 memory cards to be corrupted. Don't worry; you can reinstall the DVD drivers from the disc that comes the PS2.

Interact has announced they will release a PS2 Basic Dual Analog Controller, PS2 Wheel, PS2 Fishing Controller and PS2 8MB Memory Card when the system hits the U.S.

In a surprise move, Game Arts announced Capcom would be releasing their first round of Playstation 2 titles. They are the sequels to Slipheed (the awesome Sega CD shooter) and Gun Griffon (the great mech simulation for the Saturn). The final game is Chen Wen's Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Expect all of these titles this summer in Japan.

Square and Disney Interactive will be joining forces to create a new Playstation 2 title (with the possibility of more to come). We can only speculate as to what type of game it is going to be, with rumors pointing toward an RPG or action adventure. We are sure it will be based on the Disney Characters. What next, Crave and Taco Bell getting together to make a run for the border RPG?

With Ridge Racer V and Gran Turismo 2000 going head to head at the Playstation 2000 show, who was the winner? The gamers, of course. Both look fantastic.

Sony announced a new Playstation 2 survival horror title called Extermination. It is being developed by the Deep Space development team, which has a few Resident Evil veterans.

Onimusha the Demon Warrior is scheduled for release in Japan this summer. It is being described as a mix of Tenchu, Resident Evil and Metal Gear Solid.

Square is rumored to be working on a PS2 version of Brave Fencer Musashi.

Electronic Arts has announced that their first Playstation 2 title in North America will be SSX: Snowboard Super X. EA is also working on The World Is Not Enough (a James Bond title that will use the Quake III engine), and a WCW wrestling title.

EA chose Newsweek to be the first magazine to run screen shots of the PS2 version of Madden 2001. Odd.

Konami PlayStation2 game support is shaping up to look like this: DrumMania, Gradius III & IV, Jikkyou World Soccer 2000, Mahjong Yaroze, Jikkyou Powerful ProYakyu 7 Baseball, Reiselied, Track & Field, and the next versions of both the Silent Hill and Metal Gear Solid franchises. Also expect some sports titles and various Microsoft PC ports.

Tecmo announced that the PS2 version of Dead or Alive 2 would have 7 play modes, including a "Super Real Tag Mode" which allows 4 characters to battle simultaneously. Also, additional costumes and stages not found in the arcade will be present.

From The Games Too Cool For The U.S. Department:
Konami has announced yet another new arcade rhythm game called Punch Mania: Fist of the North Star. Based on the awesome Anime, it will feature multiple punch pads, which will light up and require the player to hit them in the proper order to power up their fighter.

Namco announced that they would release a new sniper gun shooting game Golgo 13. It is based on popular Japanese series. This game features both "digital comic" (ala Snatcher) and sniper shooting action. Each mission will feature a full background story and a target, which can range from a person to an item.

A new Macross game titled Macross Plus: Game Edition is set to hit Japan this spring, It is a 3D action shooter with battles that will take place on ground, sky and outer space. It will also feature original movie sequences between stages.

Enix is working on a new music based game called Seirei-Songs. Resembling Parappa The Rapper, this title will hit in Japan this spring.

From The Fly Like A Hawk Department:
Fire up the hype machine! Last years shred and grind bestseller, Tony Hawk Pro Skater, is just about to make its appearance on the N64 and Game Boy Color. Expect to see television commercials aimed at the younger male crowd (we guess that Activision assumes all the older gamers already picked it up for the Playstation) and special promos at some national retailers.

Of course, you would have to expect news of a sequel by now and here it is! Activision has announced they are hard at work on Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2. The sequel will increase the number of tricks and add the much sought after skate park editor and a create-a-skatepunk mode.

So, what was one of the first games announced for the X-Box? Tony Hawk Pro Skater.

From The Every Game of Dungeon And Dragons Delays The Loss Of Your Virginity By 6 Months Department:
Breath Of Fire IV is confirmed to be coming to the U.S.

Crave has added the minds behind the PC titles System Shock 2 and Thief: The Dark Project, Irrational Games to their list of developers. What they are currently working on is top secret and will be revealed this year at E3.

Capcom has announced they will be following in the steps of the Shining Force 3 trilogy and release their continuing saga Eru No Monsho (the Emblem of Eru) in bi-monthly installments. Expect to see it on the Dreamcast later this year (in Japan, at least).

Hudson of Japan's RPG Rune Jade will use the network capability of the DC. Rumored to look similar to Blizzard's Diablo, the character design will be done by Yutaka Minowa, who also worked on the Anime Ninja Scroll.

From The Who's Been Dreamcasting In My Bed Department:
Sierra has made the official announcement that Half Life will be coming to the Dreamcast in an enhanced version that will feature more detailed characters and special effects.

Acclaim has announced they will be bringing the addictive Bust A Move puzzle game to the Dreamcast this summer. There goes all of our free time!

Just when we thought no one was going to pick it up, Activision swoops in and lays claim to Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram. No word on if the special controller will also make the trip from Japan.

Eidos has announced they will be bringing out more than eight new titles for the Dreamcast. Confirmed games include Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver 3 (or is that part 2, we forget), Disney and Olympic titles.

Sonic Adventure 2 is currently under development for the DC. What a shocker.

Sega announced that the Dreamcast version of Sakura Taisen 1 and 2 will include network support, enhanced graphics, and VMU mini games. A Sakura Taisen 3 Preview Disc will also be included in both the regular and limited edition Japanese versions. No U.S. publisher has been announced.

Genki will release Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2 in Japan this June. It will feature twice as many vehicles and twice as many rivals.

From The Patience Is A Virtue We Do Not Possess Department:
Perfect Dark has been delayed- again. This time the projected release date is the end of May. The face-mapping feature has been removed from Perfect Dark for "Technical Reasons." The real reason is that Nintendo doesn't want people mapping faces of teachers, friends, or Pikachu on a character and then shooting them.

From The Next! Department:
Having conquered the character-racing genre, rumor has it that Naughty Dog is working on a Crash Bandicoot Puzzle game. What's next Super Crash Brothers fighting?

Ubi Soft has announced they will be developing a game based on the VIP television series, which stars Pamela Anderson (or whatever she is calling herself now days). What next, a game based on Baywatch? (With super slow motion replays, of course.)

Nintendo announced that the Dolphin's launch date has been moved back until the first half of 2001.

From The Bill's Cranking Up The Steamroller Again Department:
Microsoft's X-BOX is set to launch in the U.S. in September 2001. It will run a customized version of Windows (THAT really surprised us!), support DVD movies, high-speed Internet access and have a built-in hard drive for storing files downloaded from Internet. The price? $250 to $300.

Microsoft has announced that Acclaim, Activision, Eidos, Electronic Arts, Hasbro, Infogrames, Konami, Namco, Sierra, Take Two, THQ, and Universal will all be providing software support. More will follow.

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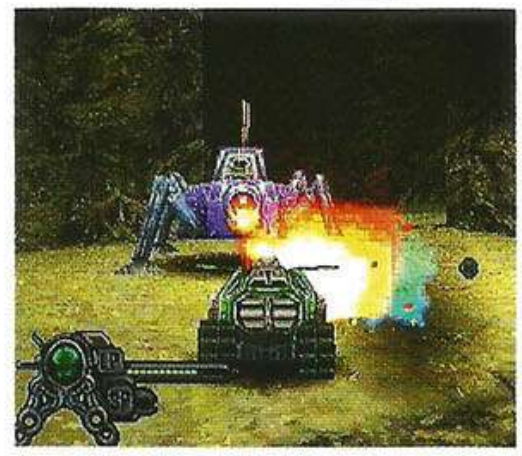
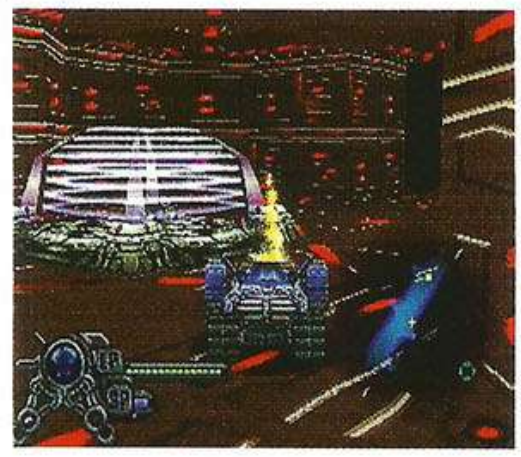
Blaster Master: Blasting Again

Platform: Playstation • **Publisher:** Sunsoft • **Release:** July • **Stage:** 70%

Aside from the semi-satisfying Machine Head, veteran gamers who grew up on Atari and subsequent 8-bit systems have been yearning for a 32-bit upgrade of Blaster Master. Though Machine Head had all of the right pieces to make a decent clone, nothing could compare to the shoot-em-up antics of this classic series.

SM's preview version is directly responsible for the demise of one Sony controller, which wasn't designed to be pulled in several directions at one time. Noticed was the lack of slowdown, even when there were many enemies on screen and explosions going off everywhere. The environments were large, and required light puzzle solving to get through them. Another plus was the cool rock and roll soundtrack, which had everyone headbanging around the office.





Strider 2

Platform: Playstation • **Publisher:** Capcom • **Release:** May • **Stage:** 85%

Flashback: 1989

Young John: Check out this new game for the Genesis, its pushing 2D platform action to its limits!

Young Wade: Look at those graphics! I was saving my money to buy Batman on VHS, but I'm going to get this game instead! What's it called?

Young John: It's called Strider. Crank up that new Whitesnake cassette, we're gonna pull an all-nighter!

Present Day: 2000

John: Checkout this new game for the PSX, its pushing 2D platform action to its limits!

Wade: Look at those graphics! I was saving my money to buy The Matrix on DVD, but I'm going to get this game instead! It looks like a new version of Strider!

John: It's Strider 2, crank up that new Korn CD, we're gonna pull an all-nighter!

Wild Arms 2

Platform: Playstation • **Publisher:** Sony • **Release:** May • **Stage:** 90%

Role Playing Games made their debut on the PSX with the resounding flop of the abysmal Beyond The Beyond. Just when it seemed that all would be lost, Wild Arms surfaced. Slowly, positive word of mouth started spreading about this title and it quickly climbed the list of "must have" titles on the fledgling Playstation.

The Wild Arms series is getting ready to come back to the Playstation and not as an unproven series, but as a triumphant classic. Returning to Filgaia, WA2 will be bringing along a whole batch of options. One that caught our eye is the Encounter Cancel system, which will allow you to avoid any battle by pressing the X button 3 seconds after meeting the enemy. No more take three steps and fight disease. WA2 will also provide further replayability with 3 different characters to adventure with.

Flintstone's Bedrock Bowling

Platform: Playstation • **Publisher:** South Peak • **Release:** November • **Stage:** 50%

In the world of semi-professional prehistoric bowling, few men have dominated the sport like Fred "Twinkle Toes" Flintstone. Now Mr. Flintstone has taken the sport to another level, the street level. By splitting a large boulder in half and hollowing out each half, the player actually becomes the bowling ball. With the help of Neighborhood X-Gamer Barney Rubble and youths Pebbles Flintstone and Bam Bam Rubble, Fred is taking his new sport to the streets and gravel pits of Bedrock.

After setting up 10 pins on a steep downhill course, contestants must leap into the hollowed-out boulder half and attempt to knock each pin down while acquiring the fastest time. In the bonus round, you can even take your boulder Tony Rock's Pro Skater style into a drained swimming pool.

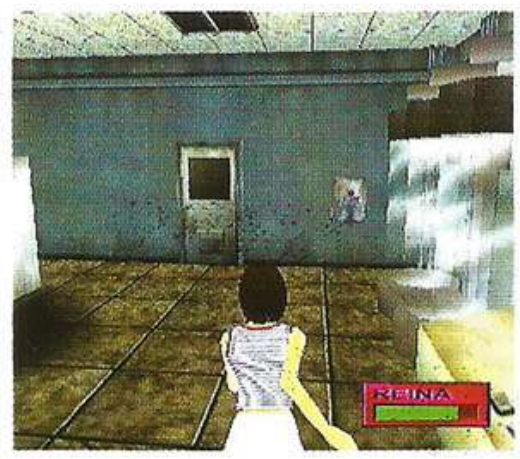
7 Mansions

Platform: Dreamcast • **Publisher:** Koei • **Release:** Now (Japan) • **Stage:** 100%

Time for another algebra question. Quit your groaning, we told you to expect pop quizzes.

What do you get when you add 1 part Survival Horror, 1 part first person shooter, and a simultaneous 2-player mode. That answer, of course is 7. Seven Mansions, that is.

Taking place on a remote island, you control both Rena and Kei (one letter off from Koei, coincidence? We think not). Much like the plot of many a classic horror tale, you are separated almost at once upon landing on the island. However, in Seven Mansions, even though both characters are separated, you can actually control both at once via the split screen mode. The action does not take place in just one house, but instead it its spread over the island and its seven mansions. Koei is deciding whether or not this title will make the trip stateside.



Deep Fighter

Platform: Dreamcast • **Publisher:** Ubi Soft • **Release:** June • **Stage:** 55%

This 2-disc game reminds us of Wing Commander in more ways that one. The first thing we noticed was that the main actress in the FMV sequences was Ginny Holder (she played Rosie Forbes in the Wing Commander movie). Not only is Maniac's love interest featured in this game, but the interface and first person cockpit view also resemble the Wing Commander series, only all of the action takes place underwater.

You start the game as a newly graduated cadet who needs to earn a place amongst your peers. Missions range from mineral gathering expeditions to protecting outposts from pirate attacks. Since the action takes place in the deep seas, it marries the freedom of space combat with the ability to provide terra-based missions. This should help DF carve out a niche in the combat simulator market.

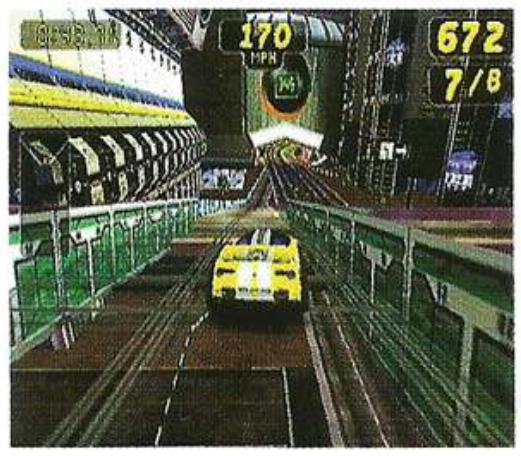
San Francisco Rush 2092

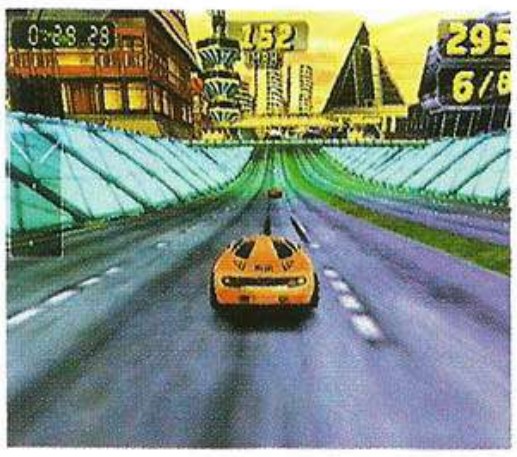
Platform: Dreamcast • **Publisher:** Midway • **Release:** July • **Stage:** 70%

What do you want in an arcade racer? A multitude of cars? Got it. Plenty of shortcuts? Check. Fiery crashes? You bet. San Francisco Rush 2092 has taken all of the things you expect from an arcade racer, flattened them out paper thin, and jammed them onto a Dreamcast disc for everyone to enjoy.

The interactive backgrounds and towering buildings have all taken on a new sheen of beauty with the leap to the Dreamcast. Visually, this is a step beyond anything Midway has yet done. However, Rush 2092 is not just eye candy.

Expect to see a stunt mode that will reward flips, barrel rolls, and just plain coming out alive. Sure, Tony Hawk can pull a 900 on a skateboard, but lets see him do it in a classic muscle car! Of course, these cars do have retractable wings, something Mr. Hawk can't boast.





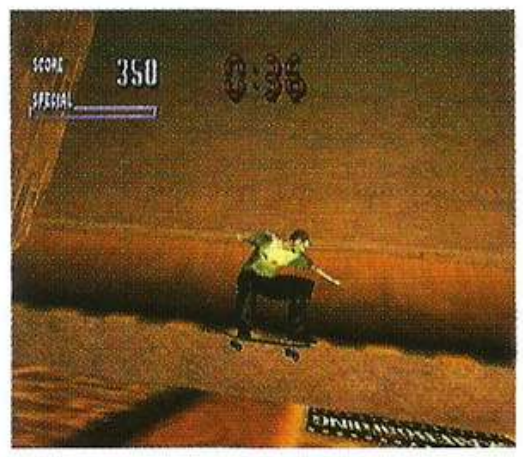
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Platform: Dreamcast • **Publisher:** Crave • **Release:** April • **Stage:** 60%

Tony Hawk's List of Things to Do:
1.) Influence the whole of Pro Skating- Done!
2.) Successfully land a 900- Check!
3.) Star in a game that will conquer the portable, 32, and 64 bit systems – Finished!
4.) Take it one step further– Finished!

Crave and Tony Hawk are working on taking the title that redefined skateboarding titles to even a higher level. Crave has stepped in to port THPS to the Dreamcast and it is looking, and more importantly playing, great.

If you were wondering how the DC controller would work with THPS, fear not. Only minutes after scooping up the controller, we were pulling off all of the moves from the Playstation version and looking a lot better doing it. What happens when a top tier title like THPS takes the step up to the DC? You go out and buy it.



Digimon

Platform: Playstation • **Publisher:** Bandai • **Release:** May • **Stage:** 75%

Anyone who as ever watched the Digimon cartoon can attest to the fact that it can be strangely addictive. More than once we had turned on the series to keep Editor Wade Monnig's son Gage from playing shuffleboard with the Dreamcast discs only to find the whole review crew watching the show (and Gage playing shuffleboard with the DC disks).

Digimon World is Bandai's attempt to bring that addictiveness to the Playstation. Set in a 3D world, DW is part monster breeder and part RPG. You must raise and train your battling monsters. Choosing different trials will raise various attributes of your pets. You are also required to feed them when they are hungry and help them out when nature calls. (If you have ever seen a digital monster defecate, you know it is not a pretty sight.)

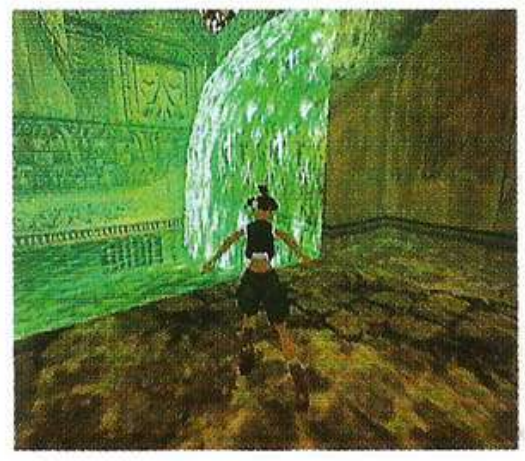
Tomb Raider: TLR

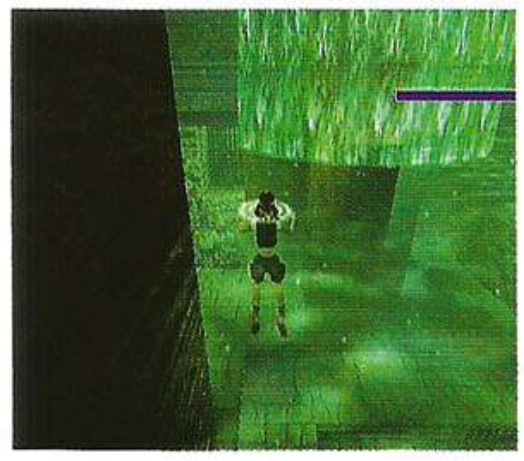
Platform: Dreamcast • **Publisher:** Eidos • **Release:** April • **Stage:** 95%

Below is a reprint of our "words you will never see used together" list from 1998: Rams - Super Bowl Champions. Microsoft - Console gaming. Tomb Raider - Dreamcast.

We guess this just goes to show you how wrong we can be. It seems that Lara will be moving out of your dreams and onto the Dreamcast in just a few short weeks. What is the difference between TR: TLR for the Dreamcast and any of its other releases? Graphics, baby!

Everything aspect of The Last Revelation has taken on a new luster of high-resolution glory that makes it look distinctly better its earlier console counterparts. Of course, all the reasons that you liked the original release of The Last Revelation are present also. And for everyone who just can't get enough of Lara, it even features her face on the VMU.





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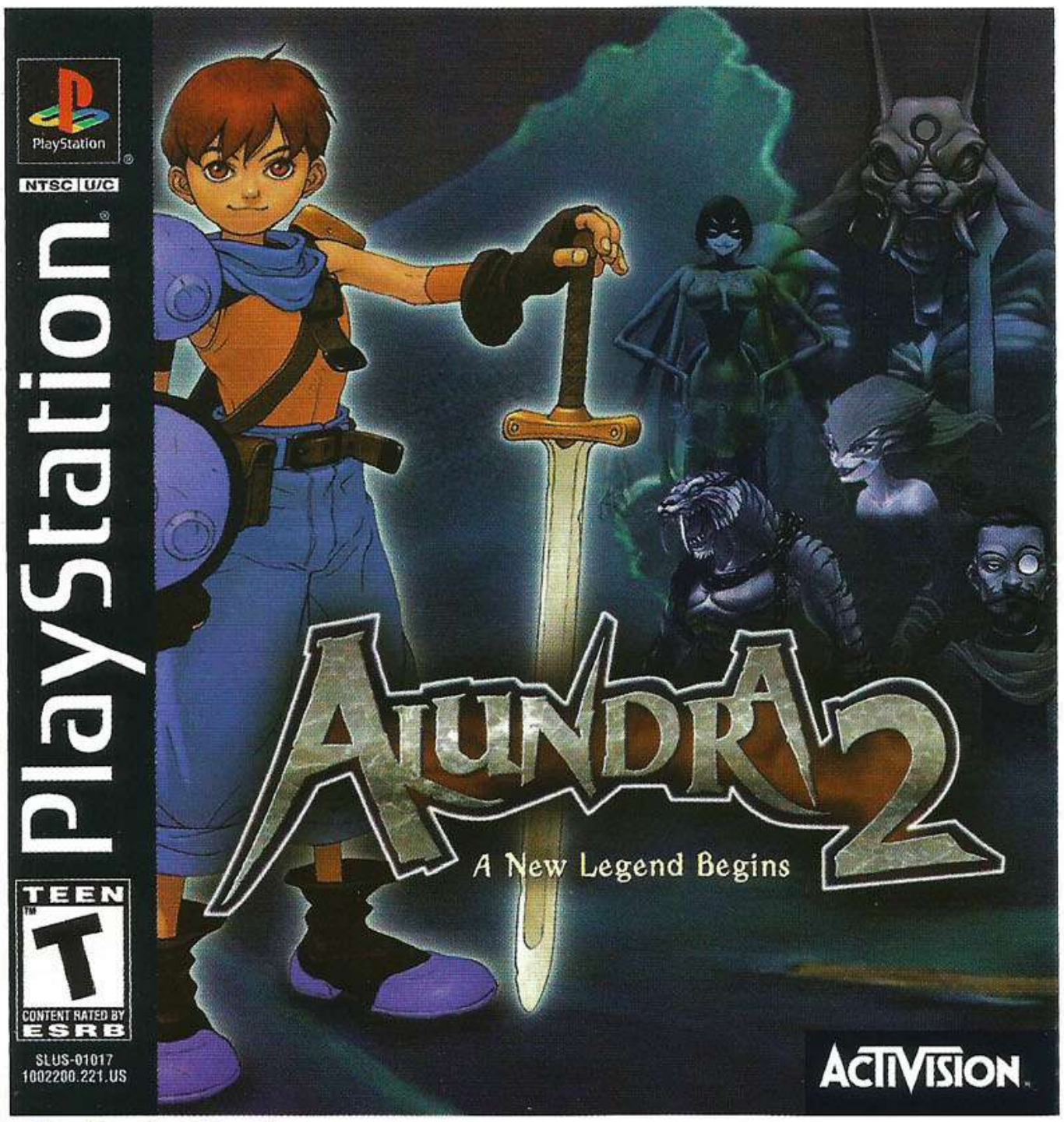
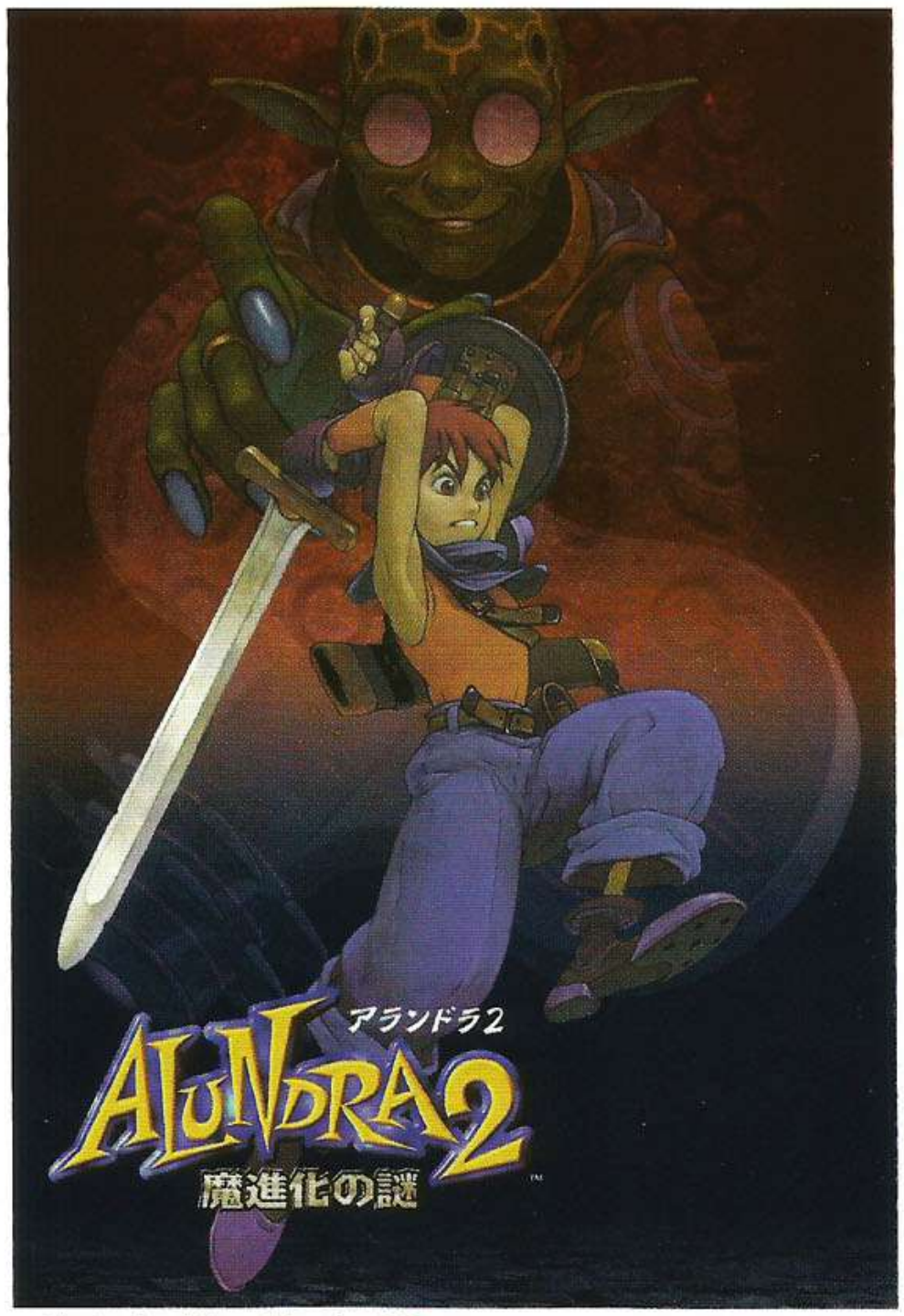


• The Alundra 2 Box Cover



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RetrospecT

Dreamcast

•**SM**'s rating system: Ranges from 1 to 99 in units of one. 50 is ***average***, and 99 is our ***top score***. We don't give 100s as no game is or ever will be perfect.

I-Spy: Operation Espionage
UFO Interactive

This is the type of title that gamers dream about. You are put in control of a collection of highly trained agents, controlling up to 4 of them at one time, and you infiltrate various facilities to steal information, artifacts, and create seven shades of chaos. What is not to like? I-Spy: OE is a true innovation is a world of stagnant genres. However, being on the vanguard of gaming has its pitfalls. A few points within I-Spy could have been better executed and more refined.

The level of actual control over your agents is limited, so it ends up playing much more like a RPG than an action title. This may not sit well with gamers expecting hands on espionage like Metal Gear Solid. However, if you go into I-Spy expecting a RPG, you should be quite satisfied.

The graphics are respectable, but as you would expect with 4 screens running at the same time, they lack defining detail. The missions are varied, and thus, you never get the feeling that you are repeating the same task over and over. Earning ability points for completed missions allows you to enhance the abilities of favorite agents. While it is best to distribute these evenly among your agents, it does allow you to favor one agent above the others and make him or her into a super agent.

I-Spy: OE is a genre-bending romp that melts RPG, strategy, and espionage into one entertaining title.

•**SM Rating: 81**

Resident Evil: Code Veronica
Capcom

For those still holding out for PS2, all the while foolishly whining, "I hate Sega and I'll never buy a Dreamcast," take one look at RE:CV. Witness game graphics so well done, it's like controlling CG. Check out the slickest character animation ever to grace a console. And notice the quickening pace of your own heart as the devilish plot thickens. It's time to bite the bullet and get a DC.

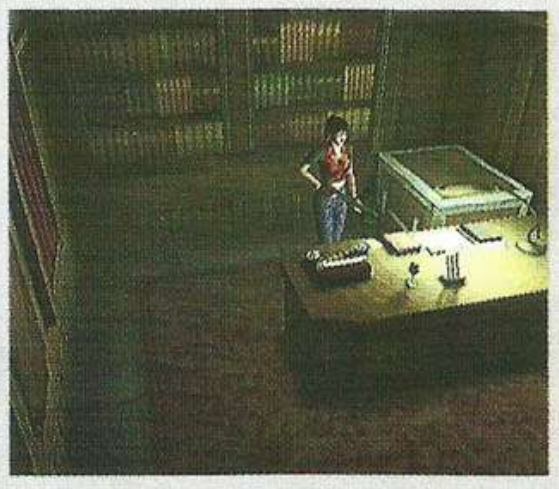
After sticking PSX owners with every type of RE upgrade imaginable, Capcom has outdone itself and made up for its greed with this, the ultimate sequel. RE:CV outshines every horror game before it. Graphically superior to just about any other console game, this 2-disc adventure oozes realism. Touches like dripping water, swinging lanterns, and scattering cockroaches create the feeling of a living, breathing world.

Control is identical to the rest of the games in the series, and RE vets will feel right at home, but newbies will need some time to get a handle on them. Ammo is scarce, making conservative gamer's lives easier. The puzzles are as tough. In other words, they require serious thought and a lot of footwork. Also, it's important to "check" every item recovered, as answers to puzzles often lie in the items themselves.

Character interaction is a big part of the story, and at times control will be turned over to someone other than the heroine. Great voice acting carries the mood, even in the tear-jerking emotional moments of the plot, and is perfectly lip-synced to the on-screen action.

With this sequel, Capcom sheds the B-Rate Horror Movie stigma. Everything is so real, so detailed, and so downright frightening that the feint-of-heart need not apply. RE:CV is the real deal.

•**SM Rating: 96**



Playstation

Alundra 2
Activision

In the recent surge of RPGs hitting the shores of America, the action RPG has somehow become neglected. Luckily, Activision has stepped up to release Alundra 2 for the Playstation.

Showing a knack for translation that has somehow evaded many of the new kids of the RPG scene, Activision has done an admirable job of providing good voice-overs and competent storytelling. Alundra 2's step into the 3D realm has ended up being more of a stumble. It is plagued by the infamous 3D action camera syndrome (that assures you that Murphy's Law has found a place within videogames by giving you the worst possible camera angle at the worst possible moment). The graphics made the trip to 3D and get the nod for providing plenty of action with no slowdown.

The controls are well laid out and only take a few moments to grasp. The only peculiar occurrence is that fact that the Action button also doubles as the Cancel button during menu commands. This leads to some odd moments when you will highlight "Yes" on a menu, hit cancel and have it register as a "No".

The main course of any RPG is the gameplay and this is where A2 does more than satisfy. It mixes a fair number of the puzzles found in the first Alundra with a portion of straightforward action that resembles Square's Brave Fencer Musashi. This title fills a void for RPG fans that are looking for a little less talk and a lot more action.

•**SM Rating: 79**

Silent Bomber
Bandai

Wow, talk about a sleeper. With a minimal amount of fanfare, Bandai has sprung an incredible action title into our midst. In an effort to try and describe this title, people have compared it to everything from Bomberman and Apocalypse to Trap Gunner. However, Silent Bomber defies comparison, presenting an inimitable gaming experience for the action seeking Playstation owner.

SB's gameplay is fast and furious. You start equipped with a standard array of bombs that you can simply drop behind yourself or place directly upon your foes. As the game progresses, you amass a collection of power-ups including extra bombs with more powerful explosions, and devastating specialty armaments.

As you engage in the assault, you leap and slide, dodging the incoming menace. Explosions rip though the screen at all times and highly intelligent enemies swarm at you from all angles (all of this without a hint of slowdown).

SB does not compromise when it comes to length or difficulty. It will put your twitch skills to the test for longer than any action title in recent memory. The negatives are few and far between. Only the voice-overs and the somewhat near-sighted view subtract from an adrenalized experience.

Titles like SB are really helping to firmly establish Bandai as a force to be reckoned with in the gaming industry.

•**SM Rating: 86**

Speed Punks
Sony

Kart racers have come a long way since Mario Kart on SNES. Graphics, game speed and story line are all factors that developers have tried to improve upon, but the real test has been making the game fun as well as technically sound.

The outrageous speed of the game engine can be tough to get used to as gamers will find themselves zooming by power-ups without having time to steer into them. Shortcuts abound, but it's tough to reach some of them, and often their rewards aren't worth the effort. After much practice, the up-tempo pace can add to the game's appeal, but some gamers may get turned off before that.

Graphics and animation are on par with the best, and the brats that make up the cast of characters are represented well. This racer has loads of personality, and that is where the real fun comes in. There's nothing like spoiling the race leader's trash-talking attitude by stopping them with a homing missile just before the finish line. Yep, cheating is the name of the game.

Control is loose, but this isn't Gran Turismo. Up to four players can compete, and, that's when SP is the most fun. There really isn't a whole lot of innovation here, but the game's attitude and speed make it a decent rental.

•**SM Rating: 65**

Retrospect

Vanark Review
Jaleco

When a new shooter comes into the SM office, it always creates quite a stir. While the genre is still thriving in Japan, it seems to be living a very sparse existence in the United States. Luckily, with titles like Vanark, the lack of quantity in the market has been made up for in quality, and presentation.

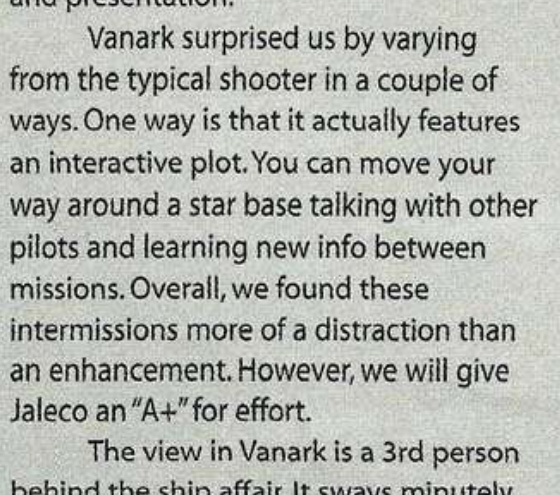
Vanark surprised us by varying from the typical shooter in a couple of ways. One way is that it actually features an interactive plot. You can move your way around a star base talking with other pilots and learning new info between missions. Overall, we found these intermissions more of a distraction than an enhancement. However, we will give Jaleco an "A+" for effort.

The view in Vanark is a 3rd person behind the ship affair. It sways minutely depending on which direction you are guiding your ship. While this provides a great view of most enemies and explosions, it is sometimes difficult to see certain areas in front of your ship.

The gameplay in Vanark is twitch heaven. It conquers the difficulty question by giving you 4 different difficulty levels." Auto Adjusting" was the most intriguing as it grades your performance as you play and adjusts the enemy assault accordingly.

Vanark is the type of shooter that the U.S. has been without for too long.

•SM Rating: 75



Sammy Sosa's High Heat 2001
3DO

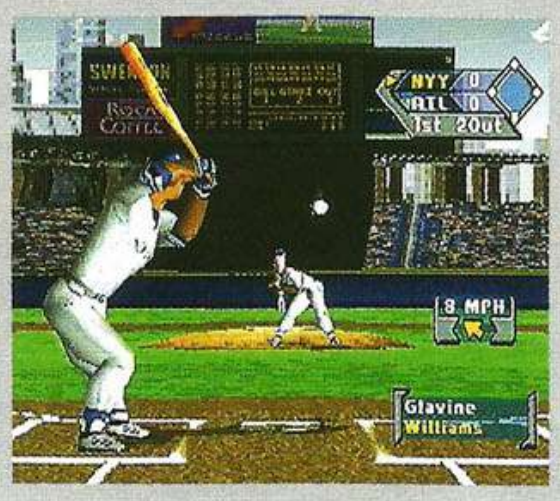
Baseball season has arrived once again and so have the console baseball releases. High Heat 2001 is nothing like last year's dismal effort, and is the best baseball title we have seen by far.

Although HH2001 is not going to blow you away with amazing graphics or animations, it will blow you away with its unprecedented gameplay and superb AI. The AI sets the standard for all baseball titles to come. Watching the computer perform double switches, timely player substitutions, well thought out intentional walks, and smart lefty vs. lefty match-ups was simply amazing. The AI could out fox some of the real MLB managers. That's not to say that there were not a few flaws. The pitchers rarely tried to execute a sacrifice bunt to move runners over and too many times the AI made bad decisions by taking risks on getting the lead runner instead of going for the sure out at first base.

The gameplay is also as solid as it gets. Unlike other baseball titles where things like runners scoring from second on a single or hitting triples were virtually impossible, HH2001 has perfected these important little nuances. Simulating games is a bit of a task. Although we liked the Sportscenter-style box scores, these games are slower than watching Mark McGwire leg out a double.

This is without question the most realistic baseball title available, and is one of a kind. We recommend HH2001 to all baseball fans.

•SM Rating: 89



Countdown Vampires
Bandai

The zombies have been ruling Survival Horror for much too long. There is a new evil in town and it is poised to take a bite (or is that a slurp?) out of the zombie dominated market. Countdown Vampires takes place in Las Vegas at the opening of a horror film themed casino. As you can imagine, things go horribly wrong. If this sounds like a script of a 1970's thriller to you, it only serves to reinforce what great production value this title has.

The opening CG animation is of extremely high quality. While it may not surpass some of the recent multi-million dollar offerings from other unnamed companies, it will gather quite a crowd around the Playstation. On the other hand, the voice acting makes massive strides in proving our theory that no matter how high quality RPG voice-overs have gotten recently, Survival Horror titles are always going to sound like a bad B-movie. Other aspects of CV's sound offerings vary. Most monster sounds are great, but the sound of a vampire dying quickly grates on the nerves.

The gameplay is exceptional. The movement is smooth and with the exception of an overly precise "pick up an item" requirement, the control could not be better. The translation is decent, with the exception that a few Japaneseisms that remain (the holy water needed to destroy vampires is called white water).

CV uses an innovative storyline and solid gameplay to carve itself a niche in the crowded survival horror market.

•SM Rating: 88

WWF Smackdown
THQ

WWF Smackdown redefines what you should expect from a wrestling game. It includes so many innovations that it is almost impossible to list them all. Unfortunately, some issues with the sound and options hold this title back.

The graphics are amazingly beautiful with the characters rendered down to the finest points. Every move is crafted with the utmost attention to detail, with unique movements like Road Dogg's punches and Austin's Elbow drop instantly identifiable and different from the default moves. On the other hand, the sound is a sore point for Smackdown with repetitive music and the almost total lack of voice-overs soiling the title a bit. Wrestlers like The Rock just are not the same without their mic presence.

New advancements like controllable guest referees, a season mode, and multiple camera angles set a new standard for wrestling titles. However, some of these modes suffer from frustrating oversights and a slightly unfinished feel. Season mode limits each human player (up to 4 players are supported via the multi-tap) to control of one wrestler. You are not allowed to switch wrestlers or take control of another one during matches. This leads to players skipping the vast majority of matches because they have no input in regards to their outcome. The create a player mode excels in the technical aspect by letting you learn new moves and adjust techniques throughout the pre-season, but comes up short in the player appearance department. Unlocking characters is also done in an odd way with you earning the ability to build each new wrestler instead of just adding them to the existing list.

WWF Smackdown is a must have title, but a few issues cause it to be merely great instead of a classic.

•SM Rating: 90

Neo Pocket

Metal Slug 2nd Mission
SNK

We now present another episode of unorthodox game reviews. The following is Metal Slug 2nd Mission as reviewed by Winston Churchill.

Metal Slug 2nd mission does not flag nor fail. In the face of superior graphics and the occasional slowdown, we shall go on playing to the end, or until we rescue all of the prisoners. We shall fight in France, or a land that looks very much like it, and on the seas and oceans in our superior submarines; we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air with specially designed fighter jets. We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be; we shall fight on beaches, landing grounds, in fields, in streets and on the hills. We shall use every means necessary to complete the 38 missions put before us. With the myriad of weapons we have available to us, we will not fail. We shall never surrender and even if, which I do not for the moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our PF squad comrades beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet or the closest thing that SNK has to offer, will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the new world with all its power and might, sets forth to the liberation and rescue of old school gaming and bring back the incredible action and excitement that some believed was lost to us forever.

•SM Rating: 89

INDUSTRIAL SPY
Operation Espionage™

This is the type of title that gamers dream about.

-Silicon Magazine

The new millennium has arrived! Political power in the world is in a state of chaos. Corporations, in an effort to rule the world, have overthrown the government. But the corporations can't be everywhere gathering the information they need to stay in power. The answer – spy organizations. The leading group, Blitzstrahl, is run only by a person known only as "Boss." The secret of Blitzstrahl's success is a special team of highly skilled, highly specialized agents... Industrial Spies.

- **Eight intriguing agents.**
- **10 challenging missions.**
- **Direct actions of multiple agents on multiple screens.**
- **Unprecedented level of character interaction and "team play".**
- **Unlimited replay value.**

TEEN
T
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NEC

Sega Dreamcast™

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UFO

www.ufointeractive.com

Decrypted: Codes and Cheats

Legend:
U=Up
D=Down
L=Left
R=Right

Play American DVD movies on a Japanese (PS2):
The following are codes to allow you to play American DVD Movies on a Japanese PS2. Keep in mind that your mileage may vary.

Code 1:
Insert a first-generation PlayStation pad (i.e., not an analog controller) in Control Port 1 of the PS2, Insert a DVD, Hold U on the pad until the DVD menu appears, Highlight the play icon and select it.

The next two cheat require you to use the Dual Shock 2 or they won't work.

Code 2:
During the PS2 boot sequence (fading to black), hold L1, ● and Select until the movie shows up (or the PS2 reports region failed).

Code 3:
The second code is: press down L3 (left analog stick) during the PS2 boot sequence until the movie shows up (or region failed).

Tony Hawk Pro Skater (PSX):
Get almost everything:
Start a career with any character, and then pause the game as soon as you can. Then, hold L1 and press ●, R, U, D, ●, U, ■, ▲ while L1 is held and the screen should shake. Now quit the game COMPLETELY and you should have access to everything in the game, except the "hidden" video.(Note: You can do this in other modes to get all decks and levels)

Play as Private Carrera:
Enter the "Get Almost Everything" code above and start any mode. Pause the game and Hold L1 and press L1. Press ▲, U, ▲, U, ●, U, L, ▲ (note that the screen will not shake on this time around). Now, quit the game, and Private Carerra should now be a playable character. Enjoy!

Zombie Revenge (DC):
Unlock various cheat modes:
Accumulate points in the VMU mini-game to get Eternal Life, Area Select, Free Continues, and Free Time Limit cheat options.

Free Play:
Successfully complete all three original modes to allow free play in arcade mode.

Alternate costumes:
At the character selection screen, highlight a character, then hold Start and press B, X, or Y.

Stage select:
Select fighting mode, then hold Start and select an option.

Blood color option:
Want some of that red stuff? Successfully complete the arcade mode to unlock the Blood Color option. Unless of course, you like green "blood".

South Park: Chef's Luv Shack (PSX):
Mini-game select
Select a character at the character selection screen. Then press U, U, L, D, U, U, on the next screen.

The Smurfs (PSX):
Level select:
Start a new game and select the "It's No Picnic" mode. Press X and wait for the FMV sequence to complete. Then, press L1, U, U, D, U, L, L, U, R2.

Earthworm Jim 3D (N64):
Play as Small Jim:
At the title screen, hold Z and press C-Up, C-Down, L, then begin a game.

Play as Earthworm Kim:
Collect 1000 marbles and successfully complete the game with a Smart Superhero rank to unlock Earthworm Kim.

Infinite lives loop:
Go outside the entrance to the "Hungry Tonight?" level and acquire the Power Parp Tin from Snott and use it to collect the close by extra life. Enter "Hungry Tonight?" and exit at once. Repeat this process for "infinite" extra lives.

NHL 2K (DC):
Looking for a few players who somehow didn't make it into this season? Try these codes and check out the hidden pictures and quotes. Also, try experimenting, almost any player who retired in the 1998-1999 season are present.

Wayne Gretzkey:
Create a player and enter "Wayne Gretzkey" as a name.
Ron Hextall:
Create a player and enter "Ron Hextall" as a name.

Tony Twist:
Create a player and enter "Tony Twist" as a name.

Marty Reasoner:
Create a player and enter "Marty Reasoner" as a name.

Dale Hunter:
Create a player and enter "Dale Hunter" as a name

Need help scoring goals? Try cutting behind the net and circling around to the front for a wrap around. It seems to have more of a chance to score than most other attempts.

WWF Smackdown (PSX):
Additional options:
Complete the Pre-season mode with a created character to unlock new options such as:
Extra character points, new outfits for The Rock and Stone Cold Steve Austin, and Stevie Richards in Create-A-Wrestler mode.

To access additional areas during "anywhere" matches:
Whip your opponent towards any door.

List of rewards for Season Mode:
Complete a season with any player to unlock the following wrestlers and rewards:

Ivory	1 year
Prince Albert	2 years
Jacqueline	3 years
Viscera	4 years
80 AP in Create-A-Superstar	5 years
Mideon	6 years
Gerald Brisco	7 years
Pat Patterson	8 years
No bonus	9 years
90 AP in Create-A-Superstar	10 years

Wild Metal (DC):
Invincibility:
During the game, press Y, R, B, L, X, D.

Full health:
During the game, press D, D, A, X, B, X.

Level skip:
During the game, press U, R, B, Y, D, L.

All weapons:
During the game, press A, A, R, Y, A, R.

Colin McRae Rally (PSX):
Enter the following names to unlock the corresponding code.

Unlock all tracks:
OPENROADS

Unlock all cars:
SHOEBOXES

Reversed tracks:
SKCART

All tracks at night:
NIGHTRIDER

Metallic cars:
TINFOILED

South Park Rally (PSX):
Unlock everything:
Successfully complete the championship mode without using any tokens to unlock all cheats.

Point Blank 2 (PSX):
Additional Options:
At the main menu, shoot at the far edge on the right side of the screen. Next, choose the "Options" selection to access more options.

GameShark

Earthworm Jim 3D (N64):
Infinite Health:
800C690F 0064

Ridge Racer 64 (N64):
Infinite Time:
811269CA 0700

Unlock All Cars:
8102F19C FFFF
8102F19E FFFF

Unlock All Tracks & Trophies
81043530 FFFF
81043532 FFFF
81043534 FFFF
81043536 FFFF

Famine...

Revolt...

Plague...

Rebellion...

The struggle continues...

War-torn China awaits your unification.

Romance VI of The Three Kingdoms

Awakening of the Dragon

- New & improved battle units including Northern Riders & the naval units of Wu
- Redesigned Battle system & new Plot system for more tactical latitude
- New duel-based strategies for more control of the action
- Over 500 characters and 100 historical event sequences
- New personal goals/ambition parameter & defensive traps
- New Chronological Records system comparing player progress to historical events
- 7 new short scenarios & 7 full-length campaigns
- 1 – 8 Player excitement

PlayStation

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www.koeigames.com

KOEI

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Gear

GameShark CDX
Interact
Playstation

When Sony removed the I/O port from the back of Playstation, Gameshark users gasped. How were they going to use a Gameshark with these new systems? Fear not, Interact has the plan.

The Gameshark CDX itself will work plugged into either memory card port one or two, and the boot CD in the tray. SM's tests show that it does not support using the multi tap. By inserting the GS CD and starting the Playstation, the GS engages. After choosing your codes, you will be prompted to remove the GS CD, and insert a game. The PSX will then boot normally. While a bit more cumbersome than the classic GS, it is actually much more reliable than the parallel port GameShark which didn't alwyas work every time you started the system. Easily upgradable (just get the latest CD) and plenty of room for new codes, The GS CDX is the result of years of tweaking and perfecting. Every Playstation owner should have one.

•SM Rating: 90

Playstation
Viper
Nyko

The 'Station's got enough different controllers to stuff a landfill, and many of them deserve that brand of treatment. Without wandering too far from Sony's Dual Shock formula, Nyko has created a solid controller that serves all of its intended purposes.

The overall design is slightly larger than the Sony pad, and should fit comfortably in all but the smallest of hands. The button layout is fine, but locating the Start button without looking may take some getting used to. Also, the smaller size of the R2 and L2 buttons makes them slightly tougher to reach. The "+" type D-pad rolls easier than most and will make playing most games a breeze. And for the cheaters of the world, a Turbo button is provided.

The analog functionality of the sticks is on par with the best and the vibration feedback is fairly strong. Gamers who hope to have a few extra dollars to spend on games will want to check the Viper out.

•SM Rating: 80

Dialogue: Smart Mail From Smart Gamers

send us a letter: dialogue@siliconmagazine.com

My friend in Sacramento gave me your January issue. I like the mag a lot. Do you distribute it anywhere else? San Francisco for example?

I want to continue reading the mag, why not do subscriptions?
Jennifer Junko
jenniferjunko@hotmail.com

I just came across your great magazine for the first time (issue #18). It's great! The cover says its free, but can you please tell me how I can get subscribed (if possible) or how I can continue to get new issues (if subscriptions are not possible)? I would also love to know where (if at all) I can get recent back issues. If you have a subscription list, PUT ME ON IT!

BTW, your masthead listed the issue as 18 of 100,000. Does that mean you've only got 99,982 issues to go? Whew, I found out about you guys just in time!
Spencer Carney
Spencer@hemispheresmagazine.com

I would like to receive Silicon Magazine at my house.
Trevor C. Markiw
AdviseORe@aol.com

•SM- Thanks for the great letters! We're going to answer them all with one large response since the questions are similar.

We will be making a big announcement about subscriptions in the near future. While we can't spill the beans right now, but we'd recommend you be sure to get your hands on the September issue when it hits at the end of this August. It's safe to say that we want you to read SM, and will make it very easy for you to do so.

As for where to get our book, we don't give out names of distribution points, but we can say that we're in over 850 stores, and finding a copy in a big city like San Francisco should not be too much of a challenge.

And yes, we plan to do only 100,000 issues. That means there are only 99,981 left to go.

I'm looking for a job as a game tester , and I was wondering if you know who was hiring or what road I should take. I'm willing to relocate and have a lot of experience. If you could offer any information of any kind I would appreciate this.
Jeffrey Ingram
GamezWarrior
acevicious@netzero.net

•SM- .A great site to check out is www.GameJobs.com. Most of the industry's HR departments post openings here, and you can often submit a resume on line. We'll state the obvious; have a well written resume on hand, and a open-minded attitude. One thing you'll quickly find out about the Games Business is that every company out there is always hiring, and a love of games coupled with an understanding of why the industry ticks will get you an interview.

Where you live will be an issue. If you're located in New York or California, you probably won't need to move as the majority of the industry is based in those the states, however to have any chance of getting a job, you will need to be ready (as you have indicated you are) to pick up and go.

Keep in mind that being a game tester is not just sitting around playing a lot of games. Generally you will work on one or two projects, and play those titles eight hours each day for weeks on end. As you play you'll need to keep a bug report for submission to the game's production team. Once the code has been revised, you'll pay though it again, and again, and again. Also, testers don't get paid a lot of money. This is an entry level job. If you do it well, however, you can move up in the world. A number of respected industry figures started out as testers. So working through the system can pay off.

While it may be tough to get started and the entry-level jobs are none too glamorous (they are still a lot of fun), SM encourages you to move forward. This is a great industry to be involved in, and over then next five years it will move in directions no one has yet imagined. It's exciting, it really is. We wish you the best of luck.

Perhaps you could answer a few questions for a loyal reader, Japanese culture junkie, and long time game addict.
1. New Strider and Castlevania (2D) games are allegedly to be released soon in Japan. I MUST know when, so I may find a practical use for my modified PS (It has made a great door-stop since the dreamcast came out).
2. I have had confirmation from sources that there is a regional de-coding memory card-like thingy for the Dreamcast. Though no one seems to know where I can buy one. HELP! I would love to be able to play Bangioh on my DC.

Thanks for the ass-stomping mag.
Absolute-0@worldnet.att.net

•SM- We always go out of our way to help a loyal reader, so let us jump right in.

1. The Strider 1 and 2 set has just seen its release in Japan and has already been announced for the U.S. as early as this May Check out our preview of Strider 2 on page ten of this issue. Sadly, the new Castlevania 2D screen shots that have been circulating are a hoax (to illustrate how easy it it to do this, see the last issue's Accessing column for a couple of simulated Dolphin screens). However, don't let that modded Playstation gather dust, pick up some of Konami's awesome Bemani games, which we will be featuring in some upcoming Wanted sections.
2. Wow, you do have good sources! You even know the official code name of the "regional de-coding memory card-like thingy"! We expect to see the external mod chips for the Dreamcast (which will plug into the DC's parallel port) sometime before the summer of 2000. We can't wait for a non-warranty voiding import option ourselves. Ask for them wherever you pick up SM.

We prefer the moniker, "Buzz spouting, tabasco-laden, shallow grave digging, Ass-Stomping, Royal ranger buckaroos" or at least Ryan does.

We Goofed

1. In the review of Sunsoft's Blaster Master: Enemy Below on page 17 of the last issue, we accidentally called it Master Blaster: Enemy Below.
2. On page 10 of the same issue, the headline for Square's Vagrant Story, mistakenly read Vagrant's Story.
We would like to apologize. To insure a quality reading experience, the offending editor has been buried in a shallow, unmarked grave- alive. That'll teach him.

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ON STEROIDS

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PREPARE FOR THE FIGHT OF YOUR LIFE.

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Animated Violence

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É um trabalho gratuito e disponibilizado na internet, sem ônus ao leitor. Por isso, quaisquer valores cobrados pelo acervo não devem ser aceitos - denuncie!

Para manter este trabalho em plena atividade, contamos também com as doações proporcionadas pelos ilustres leitores. Contamos com vocês!

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